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**Guidance for Pediatric and Family Practice Providers
Answering Parents/Caregivers' Questions about H1N1 Vaccination for Children**

This guidance serves to help your office respond to questions from parents and caregivers regarding where children can receive their H1N1 vaccination.

- **Infants younger than 6 months:** These infants are too young to be vaccinated. The best strategies to protect these infants are through standard prevention measures (frequent hand washing, coughing or sneezing into elbow, and limiting exposure to people who are sick) and through the vaccination of their caregivers or, when available, people who live in the same house.
- **Children ages of 6 months to 5 years:** Children who are not in school yet will have access to the vaccine through pediatric providers' offices. Providers will let parents/caregivers know when they have vaccine and will schedule times for patients to be vaccinated. **Children attending private/independent pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten programs will not be vaccinated through the school program. Therefore, they will have to be vaccinated at their providers' offices.**
- **School aged children, grades K-12:** The first opportunity school-age children will have to be vaccinated will be through school-based clinics, which will most likely begin in early November. The clinics will be for students in public, private, and parochial schools and students who are home schooled. Parents/caregivers will receive information about these clinics, including a vaccination consent form, prior to the start of the clinics. The clinic schedule will also be posted on the Rhode Island Department of Health's website.

It is important for parents/caregivers to take advantage of school-based clinics for children in this age group, as these clinics are safe environments in which licensed healthcare professionals will administer the vaccine. If parents/caregivers choose not to have their children vaccinated at these clinics, the vaccine is unlikely to be available in provider's offices or in other clinics until much later in the season. School-based clinics offer the best opportunity to ensure that school-aged children receive the vaccine as early as possible to protect against H1N1.

However, certain groups of school-aged children should be vaccinated at their providers' offices rather than at the school-based clinics, including:

- Children who have egg allergies
- Children who have had serious reactions to previous doses of the flu vaccine
- Children who have had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a type of temporary severe muscle weakness) within 6 weeks after receiving a flu vaccine

These children will most likely receive their vaccine from their doctor at the same time as school-based clinics, if appropriate.